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## **Environment Department, Pueblos Work Together to Clean-Up Dangerous Spills**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is facilitating extensive efforts to clean up potentially dangerous petroleum leaks at Laguna and Zuni Pueblos. \$1.2 million, from the Petroleum Storage Tank Corrective Action Fund, is being used to restore soils and groundwater contaminated by leaking gasoline storage tank systems at two gas stations located on tribal lands.

“Governor Richardson has pledged that his administration will work with the state’s 19 sovereign tribal nations on issues of mutual importance,” said Environment Secretary Ron Curry. “With the cooperation of the Pueblos of Laguna and Zuni, NMED is doing that while also protecting the vital water resources that we all must share.”

This work was made possible by government-to-government cooperative agreements between NMED and the leadership of the pueblos. These agreements established joint regulatory jurisdiction and are necessary to provide the State of New Mexico with the authority to regulate on tribal lands.

These cooperative agreements benefit both the pueblos and NMED. In exchange for their agreement to adhere to all NMED tank performance standards and pay all required fees, these facilities gain access to the financial benefits of the Petroleum Storage Tank Corrective Action Fund.

### **Laguna Pueblo**

NMED is removing 14,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil from the site of the former Laguna Mart on Laguna Pueblo. In the process, the work has created a huge hole 30 feet deep and 100 feet long. This work helps assure that both the groundwater in the vicinity of the station, and the Rio San Jose that runs adjacent to the Laguna Mart property, are protected from further harm.

The work, made possible by \$980,248 from the Petroleum Storage Tank Corrective Action Fund, is expected to be completed by late March. Laguna Pueblo plans to develop the site as a post office and government facility.

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## **Zuni Pueblo**

NMED has approved a work plan for \$223,802 to clean up a potentially dangerous petroleum leak at the Mustang service station located next to the Zuni Tribal Offices. The work plan was submitted by Giant Industries Inc., owner of the Mustang station where the leak occurred. Giant plans to replace the petroleum storage tank system in conjunction with this remediation effort. Work at the site is expected to begin in April.

As a part of the clean up plan, Zuni Pueblo will provide tribal land free of charge for use as a “land farm” where the polluted soil will be treated and restored to the quality of clean fill. This arrangement saves NMED the expense of trucking the contaminated soil to a remediation site far from the isolated area.

“By working together, tribal and state government can do much more than we could alone,” said Secretary Curry. “Through our cooperative efforts, we were able to catch these dangerous leaks before they imperiled drinking water resources and the health of the local residents.”

For further information, contact Joyce Shearer, Remedial Action Program Manager, Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau, NMED at (505) 984-1935 or Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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